

3 December 2008

Chem-Bio News

1. PENTAGON TO DETAIL TROOPS TO BOLSTER DOMESTIC SECURITY: *"The U.S. military expects to have 20,000 uniformed troops inside the United States by 2011 trained to help state and local officials respond to a nuclear terrorist attack or other domestic catastrophe, according to Pentagon officials."*

2. IRAN ANNOUNCES INSTALLATION OF ADDITIONAL CENTRIFUGES: *"Iran said Wednesday that it was operating 5,000 uranium enrichment centrifuges in a program the United States and other Western powers fear is geared toward nuclear weapons development."*

3. IRAQ'S "CHEMICAL ALI" GETS SECOND DEATH SENTENCE: *"An Iraqi court sentenced Saddam Hussein's cousin "Chemical Ali" to death Tuesday for crushing a Shi'ite revolt after the 1991 Gulf War."*

4. DEC. 3, 1984: BHOPAL, 'WORST INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT IN HISTORY': *"Ten years later the plant began manufacturing methyl isocyanate, or MIC, a cheaper but more toxic substance used in the making of pesticides."*

5. BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION MEMBERS MEET: *"Member nations to the Biological Weapons Convention are meeting this week in Geneva, the United Nations announced."*

6. ARMY LABS GET SECURITY TRAINING AFTER ANTHRAX CASE: *"The Army announced additional security training Tuesday for workers handling some of the world's deadliest germs and toxins, part of its response to an FBI finding that an Army scientist was responsible for deadly 2001 anthrax attacks."*

CB Daily Report

Chem-Bio News

PENTAGON TO DETAIL TROOPS TO BOLSTER DOMESTIC SECURITY

By Spencer S. Hsu and Ann Scott Tyson

The Washington Post

December 1, 2008

"The U.S. military expects to have 20,000 uniformed troops inside the United States by 2011 trained to help state and local officials respond to a nuclear terrorist attack or other domestic catastrophe, according to Pentagon officials.

The long-planned shift in the Defense Department's role in homeland security was recently backed with funding and troop commitments after years of prodding by Congress and outside experts, defense analysts said.

There are critics of the change, in the military and among civil liberties groups and libertarians who express concern that the new homeland emphasis threatens to strain the military and possibly undermine the Posse Comitatus Act, a 130-year-old federal law restricting the military's role in domestic law enforcement."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/11/30/AR2008113002217.html>

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IRAN ANNOUNCES INSTALLATION OF ADDITIONAL CENTRIFUGES

Global Security Newswire

December 1, 2008

"Iran said Wednesday that it was operating 5,000 uranium enrichment centrifuges in a program the United States and other Western powers fear is geared toward nuclear weapons development.

The figure given by Iranian Atomic Energy Organization chief Gholamreza Aghazadeh significantly exceeds a tally of 3,800 running centrifuges that the International Atomic Energy Agency reported from a Nov. 7 visit to Iran's Natanz enrichment facility. Iran was installing another 2,200 centrifuges and anticipated adding 3,000 of the machines beginning in early 2009, according to a U.N. nuclear watchdog report."

The full article can be found at: http://gsn.nti.org/gsn/nw_20081201_5830.php

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IRAQ'S "CHEMICAL ALI" GETS SECOND DEATH SENTENCE

By Waleed Ibrahim

Reuters

December 2, 2008

"An Iraqi court sentenced Saddam Hussein's cousin "Chemical Ali" to death Tuesday for crushing a Shi'ite revolt after the 1991 Gulf War.

It was the second death sentence to be handed down against Ali Hassan al-Majeed, who earned his nickname for his role in using poison gas against Kurdish villages.

He was first condemned to be hanged last year for the killing of tens of thousands of Kurds in the 1980s, but that sentence was held up by political wrangling."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSTRE4B12QD20081202>

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DEC. 3, 1984: BHOPAL, 'WORST INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT IN HISTORY'

By Tony Long

Wired.com

December 3, 2008

"Poison gas leaks from a Union Carbide pesticide factory in Bhopal, India. It spreads throughout the city, killing thousands of people outright and thousands more subsequently in a disaster often described as the worst industrial accident in history.

Union Carbide chose Bhopal, a city of 900,000 people in the state of Madhya Pradesh, because of its central location and its proximity to a lake and to the country's vast rail system.

The plant opened in 1969 and produced the pesticide carbaryl, which was marketed as Sevin. Ten years later the plant began manufacturing methyl isocyanate, or MIC, a cheaper but more toxic substance used in the making of pesticides.

It was MIC gas that was released when water leaked into one of the storage tanks late on the night of Dec. 2, setting off the disaster. Gas began escaping from Tank 610 around 10:30 p.m. although the main warning siren didn't go off for another two hours."

The full article can be found at: http://www.wired.com/science/discoveries/news/2008/12/dayintech_1203

ANALYST NOTE:

Bhopal remains the quintessential TIC incident and it highlights that even when a substance is not of "military-grade" in its toxicity, it is nonetheless devastating to unprotected personnel; in this case the surrounding civilian populace.

During the Cold War, a number of Soviet authors noted the possibility that given the highly built up nature of Western Europe with all of the industrial facilities producing and storing toxic chemicals, routine military bombardments could result in large-scale TIC releases that had to be considered in military planning.

For example:

"One must take into account that both hydrocyanic acid itself and its salts are widely used in different branches of the national economy. Therefore, one must not exclude the possibility that when inflicting a blow to the enemy in industrial centers chemical contamination areas occur of hydrocyanic acid as a result of damaging various industrial containers holding

this acid or its highly toxic compounds."

Yuri N. Stroykov, Clinical, Diagnostic, and Therapeutical Procedures for Toxic Chemical Agent Casualties, Meditsina, USSR, 1978, p. 123-124.

-and-

"UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES THE DAMAGE AND DESTRUCTION FROM SECONDARY FACTORS CAN EXCEED THE DIRECT EFFECT OF THE SHOCK WAVE AND LIGHT RADIATION FROM A NUCLEAR EXPLOSION. This can occur, for example, in the case of damaged enterprises of the petroleum processing and chemical industry, large stockpiles of flammable substances, dams at hydroelectric power plants causing catastrophic flooding of large areas downstream, and so forth."

G.P. Demidenko, et. al., Protection of National Economic Facilities From Weapons of Mass Destruction: A Handbook, Main Publishing House of the Vischa Shkola Publishing Assn., USSR, 1987, p. 103.

[emphasis added]

-and-

"Dozens of tons of chlorine, phosgene, prussic acid, sulphur dioxide and ammonia are used in a day at many modern enterprises, mainly in the chemical and petrochemical industry, which are very dangerous because of their toxicity and the possibility of their creating areas of chemical contamination. Enormous areas of chlorine contamination (up to 100km²) can develop when a synthetic fiber plant is severely damaged. When refrigeration units are damaged the air is contaminated with concentrations of ammonia dangerous to production personnel and people living nearby."

G.P. Demidenko, et. al., p. 104.

However, it is the release of the materials, less than the context that is the primary concern.

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BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION MEMBERS MEET

Global Security Newswire

December 2, 2008

"Member nations to the Biological Weapons Convention are meeting this week in Geneva, the United Nations announced."

"The annual states parties session began yesterday and is scheduled to end Friday; it follows discussions that took place at an experts meeting in August. Participants will seek to develop a report that promotes movement in two particular areas:

"National, regional and international measures to improve biosafety and biosecurity, including laboratory safety and security of pathogens and toxins"; and

"Oversight, education, awareness raising and adoption and/or development of codes of conduct with the aim of preventing misuse in the context of advances in bioscience and biotechnology research with the potential of use for purposes prohibited by the convention"

The full article can be found at: http://gsn.nti.org/gsn/nw_20081202_1754.php

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ARMY LABS GET SECURITY TRAINING AFTER ANTHRAX CASE

By David Dishneau

The Associated Press on Google News

December 2, 2008

"The Army announced additional security training Tuesday for workers handling some of the world's deadliest germs and toxins, part of its response to an FBI finding that an Army scientist was responsible for deadly 2001 anthrax attacks.

The Army also said Tuesday that a lab closed for security shortcomings in April won't reopen.

The new training to reinforce existing policies was recommended as a first step by a task force reviewing lab security practices after the FBI concluded that Army scientist Bruce Ivins was behind the attacks, said Michael Brady, special assistant to Army Secretary Pete Geren.

The first weeklong refresher course began Monday at the Army's flagship biodefense lab at Fort Detrick in Frederick, where Ivins allegedly obtained and refined the anthrax used in the deadly mailings that killed five people and sickened 17 others."

The full article can be found at: http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5jiuMej-NB_uebx5yj1Ytq4PKIMWQD94QQG8G1

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